

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
How U.S. government framed
up Cuban revolutionary
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‘Workers need to take political power’ New York socialists hit campaign trail



Militant/Willie Cotton

Dan Fein (right), Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of New York, campaigns at Harlem Book Fair July 18. Previous week 15,500 people signed petitions to place Fein, along with Maura DeLuca for public advocate and Tom Baumann for Manhattan borough president, on ballot.

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

NEW YORK—A spirited campaign rally here July 16, attended by more than 60 people, celebrated the completion of the petitioning effort to place the Socialist Workers Party’s candidates on the ballot in the fall election.

Over nine days campaigners collected more than 15,500 signatures on petitions for the party’s citywide candidates, Dan Fein for mayor and Maura DeLuca for public advocate, and more than 8,000 for Tom Baumann, running as the party’s candidate for Manhattan borough president. This is more than double the legal requirement.

Fein and DeLuca are union sewing-machine operators and Baumann is a student at Hunter College. On that campus about 1,600 students, campus workers, and some faculty signed to put the socialists on the ballot. Petitioners received “a tremendous response,” said Norton Sandler, SWP national campaign director, who chaired the meeting.

City officials describe the public advocate as a “go-between” between the “people” and the government, noted DeLuca, “but New York City, like the entire country, is class-divided. When elected public advocate, I will fight for my class and put forward a program

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Afghanistan: troop deaths in UK-led offensive open debate

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON—A debate has opened up within the British ruling class in response to a sharp increase in troop deaths in Afghanistan. British forces are leading a major offensive in Helmand Province in southern Afghanistan.

The operation, dubbed “Panther’s Claw,” is testing the capacity of the military for the tough fight it faces there.

Underneath expressions of “concern” in parliamentary debates and the media about the numbers of troops in Afghanistan and the adequacy of their equipment is an uneasiness among growing numbers of capitalist politicians and sections of the ruling class here about Britain’s role in the

Afghan-Pakistan war and its broader military footprint.

This is an important shift from what has marked UK foreign policy for decades—that such military intervention, and close alliance with Washington, is necessary to maintain Britain’s position in the imperialist pecking order. There are still powerful advocates for continuing this course.

The United Kingdom-led operation began June 19 with an air assault described by the Ministry of Defence as one of the largest in recent times. It was timed to coincide with the U.S.-led Operation Khanjar (strike of the sword) to the south, involving 4,000 marines. The operation comes months into the offensive begun in April by

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Official figures mask scale of joblessness

BY BEN JOYCE

Workers without a full-time job now make up one-fifth of the workforce in five U.S. states, according to a *New York Times* analysis of state-by-state unemployment data. Following the June Labor Department report on unemployment, several capitalist dailies have been pointing out that official unemployment figures hide the real level of joblessness.

“The Economy Is Even Worse Than You Think” was the headline of a feature article by Mortimer Zuckerman that appeared in the July 14 *Wall Street Journal*. Zuckerman is a member of the advisory board to JP Morgan.

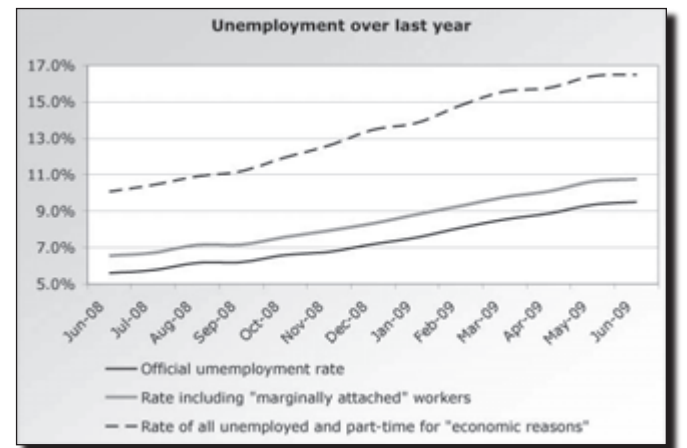
In addition, a recent report by the Economic Policy Institute points out that unemployment rates are growing faster for Black and Hispanic workers, who histori-

cally have faced much higher joblessness than workers who are white.

The official unemployment rate in the United States is at 9.5 percent as of the end of June. However these statistics, as calculated by the federal government, do not reflect a substantial number of workers who need jobs.

A large section of workers without full-time work is hidden from official calculations by excluding those who are forced to work part time. A July 15 *Times* article points out that if

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U.S. gov’t denies visa to spouse of Cuban 5 prisoner, 9th time

BY BEN JOYCE

For the ninth time, the U.S. government has denied a visa to Adriana Pérez, the wife of Gerardo Hernández, one of the five Cuban revolutionaries jailed in the United States serving draconian sentences on frame-up charges. Washington has denied Pérez visitation rights since Hernández was arrested in 1998.

Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, Antonio Guerrero, and René González—known as the Cuban Five—were in the United States to keep the Cuban government informed on the activities of armed counterrevolutionary groups that operate out of south Florida, carrying

out bombings, shootings, and other violent attacks on Cuba with Washington’s complicity.

In addition to denying spousal visitations to Hernández and to René González, the five have been subjected to grotesque violations of their rights. This includes the FBI burglarizing their homes, the use of secret evidence by the prosecution, the exclusion of Blacks from the jury, being detained in solitary confinement for 17 months prior to their trial, and more. (See article on page 6.)

On June 15 the Supreme Court declined to hear an appeal of the case despite receiving the largest number of friend-of-the-court briefs ever submitted to the court requesting review of a criminal conviction.

On July 12, attorneys for the five
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Sri Lanka gov’t interns nearly 300,000 Tamils

BY DOUG NELSON

The Sri Lankan government holds nearly 300,000 Tamils in squalid concentration camps, with no clear end in sight. The indiscriminate internment of Tamils follows the defeat of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

The government’s actions in the wake of its military offensive clearly demonstrate that its war is aimed not solely at the Tamil guerrilla group

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Philips fined for selling medical device to Cuba

BY SETH GALINSKY

The U.S. government announced July 1 that it had fined Philips Electronics of North America Corporation \$128,750 for violating the U.S. embargo of Cuba between June 2004 and March 2006. The alleged violation? Selling medical equipment to Cuba through a foreign subsidiary.

The fine is based on the travel to Cuba without a license by an employee of the New York-based subsidiary of the Dutch company in relation to the sale. Philips has subsidiaries in more than 60 countries, including Brazil where the equipment was made. The company manufactures a large range of medical devices including ultrasound systems, X-ray machines, and heart defibrillators.

According to *El Nuevo Herald*, the Spanish-language daily owned by the *Miami Herald*, during the first few weeks of President Barack Obama's administration the U.S. Treasury Department was "cautious" about fining companies and U.S. citizens for "violating" the embargo. The application of fines has "increased notably" since March, the paper says, although the pace is less than in previous years. The fine against Philips is the largest imposed on a U.S. company this fiscal year.

Philips voluntarily disclosed the "violation" to the U.S. Office of Foreign Assets Control. Evasion of the embargo can result in stiff sanctions, including up to 10 years in jail, and \$1 million in fines for corporations and \$250,000 for individuals.

In April the Obama administration overturned Bush administration restric-

tions that limited visits to the island by Cuban Americans to once every three years. Restrictions on the amount of money they can send to the island were also eased. At the same time, Obama kept in place a travel ban on U.S. citizens and residents who would like to visit, along with most other provisions of the embargo.

Washington first imposed some economic sanctions against Cuba in 1960, in retaliation for workers and farmers there not only overthrowing the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship, but for having the audacity to nationalize U.S.-owned sugar plantations and oil refineries and place them under control of working people. President John Kennedy made it a full-fledged embargo in February 1962.

Washington and Havana held talks July 14 in New York City to discuss immigration from Cuba. The U.S. delegation included representatives from the Department of Homeland Security and the Coast Guard. The one-day discussion, the first since 2003, did not end with any agreements, but the Cuban diplomats invited Washington to continue the discussion in Havana in December.

Pathfinder draws interest at Harlem Book Fair



Militant/Dan Fein

Readers browse the Pathfinder Press booth at the 11th annual Harlem Book Fair in New York City held on July 18. The book fair, an annual event of book tables, artistic performances, and readings by authors, was well attended by many in the area and the surrounding region. Pathfinder Press's booth was a center of political discussion throughout the day, with nearly \$400 in sales. The 32 titles sold include Pathfinder's newest book *Capitalism and the Transformation of Africa* and *New International* no. 14, the latest in the magazine series, with the lead article "Revolution, Internationalism, and Socialism: The Last Year of Malcolm X." Books of speeches by Malcolm X and Thomas Sankara, president of Burkina Faso's revolutionary government from 1983 to 1987, were also in demand.

—GALE SHANGOLD

Afghanistan: UK troop deaths open debate

Continued from front page

the Pakistani government and military against the Taliban and other Islamist forces in the Swat Valley and Waziristan.

Panther's Claw includes U.S., Danish, and Estonian forces along with Afghan troops, altogether numbering 3,000 soldiers, according to Britain's

defense ministry.

The operation has resulted in the deaths of some 200 Afghans, British forces claim, while 15 of their own forces lost their lives in the space of 10 days, eight in a 24-hour period alone. The majority have died as a result of "improvised explosive devices" or roadside bombs. More soldiers in the British armed forces have now lost their lives in Afghanistan than died in Iraq. The British troop casualties have triggered a major debate in UK ruling circles, breaking the parliamentary consensus over the Afghan war, and witnessing some military top brass engaging in unprecedented public criticism of the government.

Gen. Richard Dannatt, outgoing head of the army, had publicly asked for a long-term reinforcement of 2,000 troops, but the government assigned just 700 for a temporary period leading up to the presidential election.

Dannatt has now called for the 700 to stay beyond the elections and issued a "shopping list" of demands for equipment and matériel.

On July 13 opposition Conservative Party leader David Cameron accused the government of the "ultimate dereliction of duty" for "under-equipping" the armed forces.

Liberal Democrat leader Nicholas Clegg wrote, "Lives are being thrown away because our politicians won't get their act together." Neither of the two opposition parties supports increased troop deployment.

The goal of Panther's Claw is to clear and hold the Helmand River valley between two riverside towns currently controlled by NATO forces, Lashkar Gah and Gereshk, and 13 crossing points along the Shamalan canal and waterways. The aim is to do this ahead of Afghanistan's presidential election.

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THE MILITANT

Stop police frame-ups!

The 'Militant' keeps you up to date on defense cases, from the San Francisco 8, framed up for the 1971 killing of a policeman, to Troy Davis, on death row despite the fact that the majority of witnesses against him have now recanted. Don't miss an issue!



Militant/Betsey Stone

Picket line for San Francisco 8 outside courthouse in San Francisco June 8.

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Workers counter rightist anti-immigrant action

BY TONY LANE

AUSTIN, Minnesota—More than 100 people came out here July 11 in defense of immigrant rights and to counter an action by the National Socialist Movement, a fascist organization.

The rightists were outnumbered 10 to one. The counter-protesters, with chants in English and Spanish, drowned out the sound system used by the rightists throughout the two-hour event.

The pro-immigrant rights rally was largely Latino and included a lot of meat packers. One of the first groups to arrive was from the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) local at the Quality Pork Processors (QPP) plant in town. They brought signs in English and Spanish and union buttons for participants.

One worker from QPP, Antonio Hernández, found out about the action at a basketball game. He came to the rally to “show them we are no danger, we come here to work.” He said he was pleased to see a substantial number of U.S.-born people at the counter-protest. Another worker said, “We have rights like them; they need to respect us.”

This was the second such action the rightists have held here this summer and it follows other anti-immigrant actions in recent years. Last year a public meeting was organized by an anti-immigrant group to ask why the Hormel plant in

Austin had not been the subject of a raid by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). That group flew a banner over local county fairs saying “Keep America Great, Deport Illegals.”

The National Socialist Movement’s Web site states that it is committed to “defending the rights of white people everywhere” and that membership is “open to non-Semitic heterosexuals of European Descent.”

Signs held by the rightists at the action here said, “How long before ICE comes to Austin?” and “Say no to amnesty for illegals.” In their speeches they blamed immigrants for lack of jobs, health-care problems, and crime and attacked organizations they said benefited immigrants.

Among the demonstrators opposing the rightists was J.T. Murdock, who works at Select Foods in Albert Lea. She said that immigrant workers “are not here to hurt anybody. They are here to work. This makes me sick.”

Marsha González, who grew up in Waterloo, Iowa, said she was at the protest because “my husband is Mexican and my two children are Mexican.” Her husband works at QPP. She thought the protest “turned out pretty good.”

Some of the main organizers for the protest in support of immigrant rights were high school students. They had also organized a counter-protest at



Above: Militant/Lea Morrison

Above, workers and students mobilize to defend immigrant rights at July 11 demonstration. Pro-immigrant rights forces outnumber racists 10 to one. Left, rightist tries to provoke counter-demonstrator with megaphone as cop in background looks on.



the rightist action earlier in the summer. Toni Howg, one of the organizers, told the media, “We want to make it known—we don’t support the deportation of workers.”

Two other students, Wendy and Jessica Torres, said this latest demonstra-

tion was “a lot better, more people, more community, more Mexicans. It showed we aren’t afraid of them.” They said they had spoken to QPP workers to tell them about the protest and learned that they already knew, because they had received flyers about it at work.

Cuban 5 spouse denied visa

Continued from front page

explained the next steps for the case in an interview with Radio Havana Cuba.

The attorneys said that the legal

team is currently preparing for the resentencing of Guerrero, Labañino, and Fernando González. A federal appeals court threw out their sentences in June 2008 on the basis that they were excessive. Resentencing will take place on October 13.

“We are optimistic that the judge will take into account the horrible effect that the long terms of imprisonment have had on the five and their families, the recognition from the international community of all the flaws in the case, and will impose a sentence that is substantially shorter,” said attorney Thomas Goldstein.

The attorneys pointed out that the case also has a political character and noted that the five have received support from prominent individuals and organizations around the world.

In a July 15 press release, the National Assembly of Cuba condemned the decision of the U.S. State Department to deny entry to Pérez. It said Hernández is subject to “unjust imprisonment in the United States for having fought, peacefully and unarmed, against the actions of anti-Cuban terrorist groups that have always been supported and had the patronage and protection of successive U.S. governments, including the present administration.”

Sri Lankan gov’t interns 300,000 Tamils

Continued from front page

but more broadly at the Tamil people. Following the country’s independence from Britain in 1948, Tamils were subject to discrimination and violence under governments dominated by the Sinhalese majority.

Camp boundaries are drawn by razor wire and armed guards. No one can leave. Access for journalists and human rights investigators is very limited.

The International Committee of the Red Cross in mid-July closed four of its offices in the east after the Sri Lankan government ordered all international agencies to scale back operations.

Press reports indicate that water, food, and sanitation are inadequate in the crowded camps, resulting in deaths from disease and malnutrition. Aid workers report allegations of physical and sexual abuse by the military. Protests have broken out in some of the camps, according to al-Jazeera news service.

The camps are dotted throughout the country’s Northern Province, an area that had largely been under the control of LTTE.

Although the government has stated it will resettle 80 percent of the interned Tamils by the end of the year, evidence of construction at the main camp suggests that at least some areas are being set up as permanent settlements.

The government justifies the prolonged internment as necessary to vet the population of those with connections to the LTTE, whose central leadership and many of its members were wiped out in the five-month offensive.

Some 20 to 30 young people are fingered by hooded informants and taken from the camps each week, according to Sri Lanka Information Monitor, a Sri Lankan human rights organization. Sri Lanka ranks second in the world in the number of disappeared persons, according to UN reports.

The January–May offensive by the Sri Lankan military was the latest round in the government’s 26-year war with the LTTE and other armed Tamil groups, which has claimed the lives of as many as 100,000 people.

Despite the fact that the LTTE has effectively been wiped out, the Sri Lankan military announced its intention to increase its forces to 300,000 from 200,000 in order to establish a garrison force in the northern Tamil region.

A Sri Lankan group called University Teachers for Human Rights has reported atrocities from both sides. According to the group, witnesses say government forces used bulldozers to bury wounded along with the dead

and massacred LTTE fighters, including women and children, after they surrendered and disarmed.

According to the group’s report, the LTTE also intentionally killed civilians and unnecessarily sacrificed many of its young fighters. “Even as the LTTE leaders were discussing surrender terms,” it said, “they were sending out very young suicide cadres to slow down the army advance.” The report condemned the LTTE, saying they “suffocated alternative voices” and conscripted children into its armed forces.

The United Nations estimates that 7,000 civilians were killed and 14,000 wounded during the five-month offensive.

At the time of the last government census in 2001, the number of Tamils in Sri Lanka was estimated at 3.1 million people—about 16.5 percent of the population. About three-quarters of the country is Sinhalese.

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

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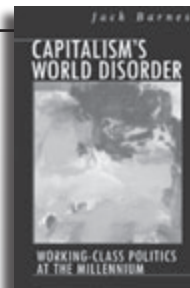
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Philadelphia: protesters fight closing of city pools

BY JANET POST

PHILADELPHIA—More than 100 protesters rallied July 14 at City Hall to demand funds be restored to open all of Philadelphia's public swimming pools. Mayor Michael Nutter's administration has closed 27 of the city's 73 pools due to social service cuts.

The demonstration was called by the Coalition to Save the Libraries, which had organized a successful public campaign to stop the closings of several libraries here from budget cuts. Zachary Hershman, a high school teacher and organizer, told the *Militant* that demonstrations have so far been held in five neighborhoods against pool closings.

"Like the libraries, the pools are a vital resource for the neighborhood," he said. "Cutting the pools is an attack on our communities."

At the rally, some protesters held signs saying, "Closing our pools = changing complexion of our city." The sign refers to a statement released by the Valley Club, a private swim club in the suburb of Huntingdon Valley, after 65 Black and Latino children from the Creative Steps day camp swam in the club's pool June 29.

The day camp, for youth from kindergarten through seventh grade, had contracted use of the club's facilities after the city government closed the pool in their neighborhood. The Valley Club July 3 cancelled the contract and returned the camp's \$1,950 fee.

The action by the Valley Club has drawn charges of racial discrimination. The children have said that they heard club members make racial remarks and saw club parents escort



Zachary Hershman

Demonstrators at Philadelphia City Hall July 14 condemn racist treatment Black and Latino children faced upon being transferred to private swim club after neighborhood pool closed.

their children from the pool.

Valley Club president John Duesler told two Philadelphia television stations that the children have changed the "complexion" and "atmosphere"

of the club, according to press reports. Duesler later said the day camp's contract was cancelled out of safety concerns due to overcrowding.

The club's members voted nearly unanimously July 12 to offer to allow the youth to return to the pool, but "in a safe environment." Creative Steps parents have declined the offer and plan to file a federal discrimination lawsuit.

The Pennsylvania Human Rights Commission is investigating the incident, and Sen. Arlen Specter has asked the Justice Department to look into whether the swim club violated the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Eric Braxton, another organizer for the Coalition to Save the Libraries, stated, "The discrimination faced by Creative Steps was just a more explicit version of the racism the campers faced when they were locked out of their neighborhood pool."

U.S. gov't, Baghdad oppose Kurdish referendum

BY SAM MANUEL

The U.S. and Iraqi governments have expressed grave concern over a planned referendum on a new constitution in Iraqi Kurdistan that asserts jurisdiction over the oil-rich Kirkuk Province and disputed parts of Nineveh and Diyala provinces. This is in addition to the three provinces that are already governed by the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG). The draft constitution was approved by the Kurdish parliament June 24.

The ongoing tensions between the U.S.-backed regime in Baghdad and the KRG highlight one of the central fault lines of instability facing that country's capitalist rulers. Numbering 5 million, the Iraqi Kurds are part of the 25-million-strong oppressed Kurdish nationality straddling Iraq, Turkey, Iran, and Syria. The Kurdish capitalist parties have been strongly allied with Washington's war in Iraq and took advantage of the overthrow of Saddam

Hussein to strengthen their autonomy in the northern provinces, which are also known as Iraqi Kurdistan.

Tensions have been sharp between Baghdad and the KRG over control of oil revenues. Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki is the leader of the dominant Shiite faction that is in an uneasy coalition with Sunni capitalist forces. While working together they also sharply compete for control of Iraq's government and its oil wealth. The central government has been particularly angered by the Kurdish regional government's negotiation of oil contracts directly with foreign oil companies.

Inclusion of Kirkuk Province in Iraqi Kurdistan is hotly contested. Under Hussein's Baath Party regime thousands of Kurds were forcibly removed from Kirkuk and replaced with Arabs, many of them forced to move there to ensure Baathist control of the province and its oil. In the last few years hundreds of thousands of Kurds have resettled in the province, often driving out Arabs.

U.S. vice president Joseph Biden began a three-day visit to Iraq on July 2. He strongly criticized the planned referendum on a new Iraqi Kurdistan constitution, calling it "not helpful." In an interview published in the July 9 *Wall Street Journal* al-Maliki said the Kurds are "crossing the green line" and "circumventing the central government authority," which are "provocations" that will damage relations. He added that these were differences that could be resolved.

"This lays the foundation for a separate state—it is not a constitution for a region," said Osama al-Nujaifi, a Sunni Arab member of Iraq's national parliament, according to the *New York Times*.

The United Nations on April 22 handed the Iraqi government its report on the disputed Kurdish regions, recommending that Kirkuk not be incorporated into Kurdistan. A senior Kurdish official involved in UN-sponsored talks between Baghdad and the KRG described them as a "punch in the face. . . . We are fed up with them," reported the *Times*.

Adnan al-Mufti, spokesman for the

Kurdish parliament, called the passage of the draft constitution an "important and historic day. For the first time the people of Kurdistan took steps to be the owner of their own constitution and exercise their natural right."

The KRG had planned the referendum to take place July 25, the same day as parliamentary and presidential elections. The Kurdish parliament announced that it would reschedule the referendum after the region's election commission said it could not organize the two votes on the same day and that the earliest the referendum could be held would be August 11.

Figures mask real joblessness

Continued from front page

part-time workers that want full-time jobs were included in official statistics, they would make up about one-third of the unemployed. On average, workers in this category work three days per week.

In his *Wall Street Journal* article Zuckerman cites 10 reasons the economy is in more trouble than the 9.5 percent unemployment rate indicates. Among statistics cited by numerous economists—average monthly job losses of around half a million, increasing unpaid leaves or furloughs, more and more workers in part-time jobs—Zuckerman adds that the average length of unemployment, now nearly 25 weeks, is higher than it's been since the government began tracking the data in 1948.

In the 1960s the Kennedy administration reconfigured the way the unemployment rate is determined by creating a new statistical category called "discouraged workers"—those who have been unable to find work for so long that they have stopped looking—who are no longer counted as unemployed. In 1994 the Clinton administration then took this category and removed it from government statistics altogether, no longer counting them as part of the workforce.

These workers, along with the "marginally attached" who the government doesn't count claiming they haven't looked for work for the past month, and those officially counted

brings the number of unemployed and underemployed to nearly 26 million workers, or 16.5 percent of the workforce.

Even workers who do have a full-time job face fewer and fewer hours as the capitalist depression deepens. The average workweek is now down to 33 hours—the lowest level since the U.S. Department of Labor began recording this figure in 1964.

Rising unemployment has a disproportionately bigger impact on oppressed nationalities. A July 15 brief by the Economic Policy Institute reports that joblessness has risen much more among Blacks and Hispanics in the past 18 months than it has among whites.

For decades unemployment among workers who are Black has been around double that of workers who are white. At the end of 2007 official rates were 4 percent for whites and 8.7 percent for Blacks. This trend has continued as the capitalist economic crisis deepens. In the past year and a half the unemployment rate for whites grew by 2.8 percent while it jumped 4.3 percent for Blacks. Hispanics had the highest rise in unemployment, jumping by 4.8 percent.

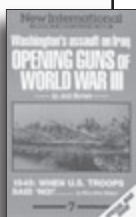
The report notes that the highest Black to white unemployment ratio was in Louisiana, where Blacks were three times as likely to be unemployed as whites. In Alabama, New York, Mississippi, and Texas, Blacks were more than twice as likely to be unemployed as whites.

For further reading...

New International no. 7

by Jack Barnes

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by the Young Socialists, Steve Clark

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Obama speaks at NAACP convention in New York

Says ‘individual responsibility’ is key to progress

BY OMARI MUSA
AND SAM MANUEL

NEW YORK—President Barack Obama was the featured speaker at the closing session of the NAACP convention. The association held its centennial convention July 11–16 in New York, where it was founded in February 1909.

Several leading Democratic and Republican party elected and appointed officials also spoke during the week-long meeting. They included U.S. House of Representatives speaker Nancy Pelosi, Congressman Charles Rangel, New York senator Charles Schumer, New York governor David Paterson, New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg, and Republican national chairman Michael Steele.

While conceding that the “pain of discrimination is still felt in America,” Obama struck themes of “responsibility” that were at the center of a Father’s Day speech he gave in 2008 holding individual Black families responsible for education, nutrition, and health care of children.

“We have to say to our children,” the president told the NAACP convention, that living in a “poor neighborhood” with “crime and gangs” is no reason to “get bad grades—that is not a reason to cut class—that’s not a reason to give up on your education and drop out of school. No excuses! No excuses!”

“To parents,” Obama said, “You can’t just contract out parenting.” He said parents must take responsibility for helping their children learn, turn off the Xbox, and attend parent-teacher conferences.

Obama said African Americans continue to face “structural inequalities” left by the nation’s legacy of discrimination. “Reducing” those structural inequalities, he said, has been made more difficult by the state of the economy. The president said that his administration’s economic proposals would “lay a new foundation for growth and prosperity that will put opportunity within the reach of not just African Americans, but all Americans.”

At the public opening of the convention NAACP Board of Directors chairman Julian Bond hailed the election of Obama. “We now have arrived at the intersection of hope and change—and a black man is directing traffic,” he said.

Bond also made note of the precari-

ous situation facing what he called middle class Blacks. “The fragility of middle class life for black Americans is illustrated by our downward mobility. Nearly half of blacks born into the middle class 40 years ago have descended into poverty or near poverty as adults compared to only 16 percent of whites.”

In his keynote address NAACP president and CEO Benjamin Jealous pointed to the Supreme Court decision in the New Haven, Connecticut, firefighters’ case that struck a blow against affirmative action. “This decision is a step backward for equal opportunity in employment,” Jealous said.

Jealous also pointed to two cases of African Americans on death row. He called on the delegates to continue to support the fight to win a new trial for Troy Davis and to win his freedom. Davis has been on death row for 18 years after being convicted in a frame-up trial for killing a white cop in Savannah, Georgia. “There is no physical evidence linking Davis to the crime and seven of the nine witnesses have recanted or contradicted their original testimony, several saying they were coerced,” Jealous said. “Beyond a shadow of a doubt, this man is innocent.” The NAACP has filed an amicus brief in the case.

Jealous also noted that the Missouri conference of the NAACP has demanded clemency to stop the execution of Reggie Clemons. Clemons was sentenced to death in 1991 for the murder of two women who drowned in the Mississippi River.

NAACP board member Harold Crumpton stated that Clemons was “tortured by police” into making a confession. As in the Davis case there was no evidence linking Clemons to the crime, “no fingerprints, no DNA, no hair or fiber samples,” Crumpton noted.

Jealous also denounced the action of the Valley Club in a Philadelphia suburb for excluding Black youth from their swimming facility earlier this month.

Immigration raid protested in Tel Aviv



Shachaf Polakow/Activestills.org

At least 300 people demonstrated in Tel Aviv July 11 to protest the newly formed Oz (Courage) Unit of 200 immigration cops and recent raids in Tel Aviv. Demonstrators carried signs in Hebrew, English, and Spanish. Some children held signs saying, “Israel is my home.”

The Oz Unit arrested 300 workers, both legal and undocumented, July 1 near Tel Aviv’s Central Bus Station under the “Hadera-Gadera” law. It requires non-Jewish immigrants—even those with work permits—to live outside Tel Aviv and the towns around it.

Israeli law recognizes two categories of immigrants: those of Jewish descent who are considered potential citizens, and “foreign workers,” that is, immigrants with or without papers who are not Jewish.

At the end of 2008 there were an estimated 285,000 “foreign workers” in Israel, some 97,000 of them without work or residency permits. The same year 3,300 undocumented workers were deported, compared to 4,000 in 2007 and 21,000 in 2003. Among the largest groups of these immigrants are workers from Sudan, Ivory Coast, and Eritrea. There are also many from the Philippines, China, Thailand, Romania, India, and Latin America.

—SETH GALINSKY

British troops in Afghanistan

Continued from page 2

tial election in August, seen as key by the occupying forces led by Washington.

Imperialist troops in Helmand have on occasion taken some of the villages but have been unable to hold them. “We have never had the density of forces that would allow us to go into more than fairly limited areas and change the dynamic by actually staying,” said the new commander of U.S. forces, Gen. Stanley McChrystal. Reinforced by 10,000 U.S. troops, the allied forces now aim to take the region. The canal would become the

defensive line, according to the plan.

The operation will be carried out with less recourse to aerial bombardment, according to a new tactical directive issued by McChrystal. “The Taliban cannot defeat us militarily, but we can defeat ourselves,” he wrote. “We will not win based on the number of Taliban we kill, but instead on our ability to separate insurgents from the center of gravity—the people.”

Since that directive came into force, calls for close air support for ground fighters have dropped from 35 percent of all engagements to 17 percent.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



August 3, 1984

MANAGUA, Nicaragua—Mobilized around the slogan, “Everything for the war front, everything for the fighters,” some 200,000 or more people rallied here July 19 to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the Nicaraguan revolution. The crowd totally filled Managua’s new Carlos Fonseca Plaza, spilling over into the neighboring grounds of the Rubén Darío Theater and beyond it along the Simón Bolívar Boulevard. Estimates ran as high as 300,000.

The turnout for the celebration exceeded by far the predictions of Sandinista officials, who had aimed to mobilize 150,000 people. Given the resources needed to maintain defense against the U.S. war here, government leaders decided not to provide transportation for massive turnouts from other cities.



August 3, 1959

The issue of “wage inflation” advanced by the steel corporations as justification for forcing the Steelworkers out on strike is as phony as a plugged nickel. If there were no other evidence to confirm the fact, the publication of record-breaking profit figures of the major steel producers for the first half of the year would suffice.

United States Steel Corporation reported a whopping \$254,948,496 net profit. This represents a phenomenal net of over 10 cents on each dollar of sales. These figures prove the contention of the union that the corporations can easily meet the wage demands of the Steelworkers without raising the price of steel, and still make a handsome profit.



August 4, 1934

The great trucking strike of Local 574—the third strike conducted by this militant organization within six months—begins its third week today, and it is clear to all that a critical stage in the struggle is at hand. Having smashed every attempt of the bosses to break through the iron ring of 574’s pickets by the aid of police, even when the latter cruise the streets with loaded shotguns, the strikers now stand face to face with a determined campaign to break the strike by military force.

The National Guard, called out by the Farmer-Labor Governor, “to protect the citizens of Minneapolis” is issuing permits on a wholesale scale for the operation of scab trucks under military protection.

Malcolm X: The Last Speeches

Six speeches and interviews that shed light on the revolutionary leader’s political evolution during the last months of his life, including the final two speeches in print given by him before his assassination on February 21, 1965. —\$17

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How U.S. gov't framed Cuban revolutionary

Facts of Cuba's '96 downing of rightist planes

(Sixth in a series)

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

What happened on Feb. 24, 1996, off the coast of Havana? The facts help expose the U.S. government's frame-up of Gerardo Hernández, one of the five Cuban revolutionaries serving long sentences in U.S. prisons.

Hernández was sentenced to a double life term plus 15 years on false charges, including "conspiracy to commit murder." In an unprecedented accusation, U.S. prosecutors held Hernández responsible for the sovereign act of the Cuban government in shooting down two hostile planes that invaded its territory.

On Feb. 24, 1996, three planes left Opa-locka airport near Miami and flew well into Cuban airspace. The planes were piloted by members of Brothers to the Rescue (BTTR), a counterrevolutionary Cuban American group that for years had organized provocative flights over Cuban territory despite Havana's repeated warnings to Washington. This time, after they defied warnings by Cuban air traffic controllers, two of the planes were shot down by Cuba's air force.

U.S. officials, however, have tried to turn the victim into the criminal and the criminal into the victim. They claim Brothers to the Rescue was on a "humanitarian" mission to rescue Cubans drifting on rafts toward U.S. shores. They assert the planes were downed in international, not Cuban, airspace. And they allege Hernández knew beforehand of a plan to shoot down the planes that day.

What are the facts?

Basulto's record: CIA-trained thug

Far from being a humanitarian, José Basulto, the founding leader of BTTR, is a CIA-trained counterrevolutionary. Questioned during his March 2001 testimony in the federal trial against the five Cuban revolutionaries, Basulto proudly acknowledged his decades-long record.

Basulto testified that after the victory of the Cuban Revolution he had been trained by the CIA in Panama, Guatemala, and the United States "in intelligence, communications, explosives, sabotage and subversion," reported the March 13, 2001, *Miami Herald*. The CIA infiltrated him into Cuba, under the identity of a physics student at the University of Santiago, to help prepare the ground for the 1961 U.S.-organized

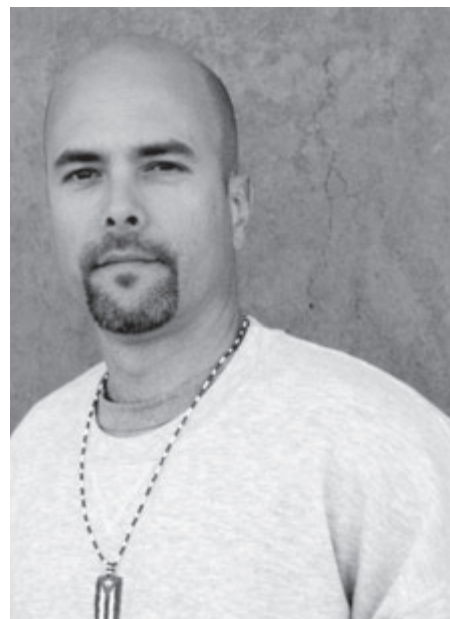
mercenary invasion at the Bay of Pigs, which Cuban working people crushed in 72 hours.

In August 1962, Basulto and other counterrevolutionaries took a speedboat mounted with a 20-mm cannon off Havana's shores and fired on the Sierra Maestra Hotel and a nearby theater. In the 1980s he flew supplies to the U.S.-organized contras seeking to overthrow the Nicaraguan revolution.

Basulto, who became a well-off Miami businessman, said in the trial testimony that he launched Brothers to the Rescue in 1991 as a "humanitarian rafter-rescue group." That was the cover under which the outfit carried out numerous provocative operations off Cuban shores—and reeled in millions in "nonprofit charity" donations. BTTR shifted its tactics, however, after the 1994 and 1995 Cuba-U.S. migration accords, under which U.S. authorities returned sea-borne Cubans to the island. "Without rafters, the money dried up," Basulto acknowledged in his testimony, the *Miami Herald* reported.

Provocations against Cuba

Emboldened by Washington's lack of action, BTTR stepped up its provocative flights over Cuba in 1994. On November 10 that year the group flew two planes from the U.S. naval base at Guantánamo and dropped leaflets calling on people to revolt. The outfit publicly acknowledged that in July 1995 and twice in January 1996 it organized flights directly over Havana,



Gerardo Hernández, framed up for Brothers to the Rescue plane shootdown, at U.S. penitentiary in Victorville, California, in 2008.



U.S. government did nothing to prevent Brothers to the Rescue, a rightist group in Miami, from repeatedly violating Cuban airspace prior to being shot down in 1996. Above, José Basulto, CIA-trained leader of the group who has long history of violent actions against Cuba.

dropping antigovernment leaflets.

Cuban officials reported that over a 20-month period, BTTR carried out 10 violations of Cuban territory. Havana repeatedly demanded that Washington prevent them. After a July 13, 1995, low-altitude incursion over the capital city, Cuba issued a public statement that "any boats from abroad can be sunk and any aircraft downed" if they entered Cuban territory for hostile reasons. Yet Washington did nothing to stop these escalating provocations—not even revoke the pilots' licenses.

On Feb. 24, 1996, two hostile incursions into Cuban airspace took place, Cuban authorities reported. In the first, three Cessna planes retreated after being intercepted by Cuban MiG fighters jets.

In the second incursion that day, the Havana air traffic control center detected one of the three Cessnas again heading toward Cuban airspace north of Havana. It warned the pilot, who, according to a Cuban foreign ministry statement, "said it was clear he could not fly in that zone but he was going to do it anyway."

A transcript released by Washington, based on U.S. intelligence recordings, contains the following radio exchange between the Havana air control tower and Basulto.

Havana: "We inform you that the area north of Havana is activated. You are taking a risk by flying south of 24 [the 24th parallel]."

Basulto: "We are aware that we are in danger each time we fly into the area south of 24, but we are willing to do it as free Cubans."

The three planes penetrated Cuban airspace. After they ignored warning passes by the air force planes, two of the planes were shot down, well inside the island's 12-mile territorial limit. The third plane, piloted by Basulto, left the other two behind and headed back into international airspace.

Cuban authorities provided evidence that the two planes had been shot down over Cuban waters, including personal items from the four downed pilots and debris from the wreckage. After that decisive action, the hostile flights over Cuba ended.

Sovereign action in Cuban airspace

Washington has maintained that the shootdown took place in international airspace, although it acknowledged that Basulto briefly violated Cuban territory. This position was echoed by the International Civil Aviation Organization, which relied heavily on data provided by the U.S. government.

The Clinton administration used these claims to justify passage of the Helms-Burton Act, a major tightening of the U.S. economic embargo against Cuba.

And in January 2001 Clinton signed an executive order giving \$96 million in frozen Cuban funds to families of the rightists killed in the shootdown. The money was seized from payments owed to Cuba's telephone company for phone services between the two countries.

The U.S. government's assertions, however, were contradicted during the trial by retired U.S. air force colonel George Buchner. Testifying as a defense witness on March 21, 2001, he said the evidence showed the BTTR pilots were well inside Cuba's airspace when they were downed.

Buchner, a former commander of the North American Air Defense Command (NORAD), said he had reviewed transcripts—provided by the U.S. National Security Agency—of conversations between the MiG pilots and a Cuban commander on the ground. He concluded the two planes were shot down about six miles and 5.5 miles, respectively, off the Cuban coast.

"The trigger was when the first aircraft crossed the 12-mile territorial limit," he testified. "That allowed the government of Cuba to exercise their sovereign right to protect its airspace."

In fact, Buchner said, the Cuban air force pilot "showed restraint" by breaking off pursuit of Basulto's plane as it headed toward international airspace.

Moreover, the *Miami Herald* reported, "Buchner said the Cessnas had given up their civilian status because they still carried the markings of the U.S. Air Force and had been used to drop leaflets condemning the Cuban government."

Over the years, in fact, U.S.-based counterrevolutionaries have used Cessnas and other "civilian" aircraft to unleash biological weapons on Cuban canefields and other crops, drop firebombs, and introduce saboteurs and spies on the island.

Shootdown not a 'plot'

Gerardo Hernández was charged with murder conspiracy for allegedly giving Cuban authorities information on the BTTR flight plan for Feb. 24, 1996, as part of a supposed plot to shoot down the group's planes.

In fact, BTTR itself had reported its flight plan to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), which then transmitted that information to the Havana air control authorities.

After months of escalating BTTR provocations and Cuba's warnings that these would not be tolerated, both Washington and Havana were anticipating an incident. The day before the shootdown, an internal FAA memo warned that "it would not be unlikely that the [BTTR would] attempt an unauthorized flight into Cuban airspace tomorrow, in defi-

Continued on page 9

Recommended Reading

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Tom Leonard: leader of Socialist Workers Party

Made lessons of labor battles come to life

BY CINDY JAQUITH

Tom Leonard, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party, grew up during the 1930s depression, living through the devastation the capitalist system brought down on working people at that time and witnessing the rise of working-class solidarity in response. For nearly six decades he fought to build a party capable of leading the struggle to replace that system through proletarian revolution.

When he died at age 84 this past June, Leonard was active in the SWP branch in Houston and working on a project to make the rich history of the party's work in the maritime industry in the 1940s and 1950s accessible to new generations of fighters.

In 1942, at the age of 18, Leonard went to sea in the merchant marine. Over the next years his eyes would be opened to the realities of imperialist war, colonial exploitation, and racism, as he traveled to countries like Korea, China, South Africa, and the Philippines.

It was the middle of World War II. Like others, Leonard went to a military-run training school to get his seaman's papers.

He received a lesson in class politics after boarding his first ship. Two members of the union quickly took him to task for wearing the military uniform issued at the training school. They said unionists rejected that uniform because it symbolized the threat of militarization of commercial ships, undermining the union. Leonard never wore the uniform again.

Deadly conditions for seamen

Conditions for seamen at the time were deadly. Thousands—including sailors who belonged to the SWP—died either from wartime torpedo or bomb attacks or when their “liberty ships”—so named to encourage skeptical workers to think the U.S. war effort was in their interests—broke into pieces on the high seas.

Leonard wrote a review of a TV documentary on liberty ships, which appeared in the Aug. 14, 1995, *Militant*. Some 3,000 of these vessels were produced, primarily to carry war materials. They were “shoddily built, due to horrendous round-the-clock speedup imposed on the labor movement to ‘support the war effort,’” Leonard wrote. “Some of the ships were built in about 10 days; rushed welding encouraged by supervisors as well as poor design resulted in many of them breaking up and sinking in rough weather.”

There were SWP members in several maritime unions, including the National Maritime Union (NMU), Seafarer's International Union, and Sailors Union of the Pacific. As these party members carried out collective, sustained political work with other workers on the ships, joining in fights to strengthen the unions, more sailors were recruited to the communist movement.

SWP members told coworkers the truth about World War II, that it was a war over capitalist markets that working people should oppose. This was the opposite of what the Communist Party USA, which led the NMU at the time,

said about the war.

In his *Militant* review about the liberty ships, Leonard wrote, “The trade union bureaucracy, the Communist Party, and nearly every other current in the labor movement collaborated with the U.S. government to paint World War II as a ‘war for democracy.’ . . .

“Despite services rendered to U.S. imperialism in World War II, the Communist Party took major blows in the post-war witch-hunt,” he explained. “In 1950 more than 2,000 seamen, many of them members of the Communist Party—but also members of the Socialist Workers Party and other union militants—lost their seamen's papers and right to sail at the hands of the U.S. Coast Guard.”

At the 1949 NMU convention, the union bureaucracy, no longer CP-dominated, rammed through a motion aimed at establishing a blacklist to be used against socialists and other militants. It called for a roll-call vote, putting every delegate on record, would they defend the United States in a war with the Soviet Union? SWP members who were



Militant/Flax Hermes

Supporters of Steelworkers Fight Back campaign of Ed Sadlowski joined 1975 Washington, D.C., rally for jobs.

delegates at that convention knew that by voting against the motion they were guaranteed to lose their jobs. They stood their ground, voting against.

Leonard joined the SWP in 1951. He was active in many different branches of the SWP during his lifetime, spending nearly three decades building the party in Houston. The Houston branch was chartered in 1970, part of an expansion of the SWP in the South to participate more effectively in the class struggle there.

The city was 45 percent Black and Latino at the time. Houston's rulers were determined to keep political space for working-class politics closed. The police force was riddled with members of the Ku Klux Klan, a racist and antilabor outfit that used violence against anyone trying to protest the U.S. war in Vietnam or race discrimination at home.

In 1971 the SWP launched the mayoral campaign of Debby Leonard, who was married to Tom. The party faced a host of requirements designed to keep working-class candidates off the



Inset: Militant/Glova Scott

Strike by seamen in late 1940s protested low wages and dangerous conditions. Tom Leonard (inset), who joined communist movement through sailors he met on the job, speaks in 2005 at New York Militant Labor Forum on “Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialism: Some Experiences from World War II and the Korean War.”



ballot—a \$1,250 filing fee, five years' residency in the city, ownership of real estate for two years, and signing a “loyalty oath.” A lawsuit filed by the socialists forced city officials to back off from these onerous restrictions.

A month after the campaign began, a pipe bomb was thrown into the SWP campaign offices, blowing out the windows and the door. This was one of 18 violent attacks carried out in the city in the space of a year and a half for which no one had been arrested, despite widespread suspicions that the Klan was behind them. The SWP campaign refused to be intimidated and demanded the city take action to apprehend the bombers.

The cops' initial response was to tell the media the socialists had probably bombed themselves to get publicity. Undeterred by such slanders the SWP united various groups and individuals who had been targets of violence to demand the city put a halt to the Klan's reign of terror.

The socialists waged an aggressive campaign for mayor at the same time. Debby Leonard was even invited by a local TV station to debate the grand dragon of the United Klans of America, Frank Converse, not once but twice—the second time for an hour without commercial interruptions.

The SWP's refusal to cut and run, combined with growing support from other forces to open up political space in the city, finally produced results. Beginning in late May several Klan members were charged with attacks on the SWP campaign offices and other targets. Converse was indicted for illegal possession of weapons. The KKK attacks subsided.

Steelworkers Fight Back

Tom Leonard and other members of the SWP branch in Houston, along with other workers, were active in 1976 in a fight to win the right to vote on contracts in the United Steelworkers (USWA) union. As part of this effort they backed the campaign of Ed Sadlowski for USWA president. He campaigned for union democracy and militant defense of workers' interests against the bosses.

The entrenched bureaucracy in the steel union was determined to beat back this challenge. On July 26, Sadlowski supporter Ben Corum was passing out flyers to the shift change at Hughes Tool in Houston when he was shot and narrowly escaped death. Leonard, who was a member of the USWA, joined in efforts to denounce this act.

Sadlowski did not win the election, but rank-and-file steelworkers continued to fight for control of their union. In 1977, the USWA officialdom accepted a contract with the industry. Workers still did not have the right to vote on the pact, nor to even read it. When the *Militant* obtained a copy of the whole text it printed the document with explanatory notes in the margins. The *Militant's* sister-language magazine, *Perspectiva Mundial*, translated the contract into Spanish and published it as well. Thousands of copies were sold at steel mills and in working-class neighborhoods across the country.

Turn to industry

The experience in the USWA helped lay the basis for what the SWP called the “turn to industry,” a campaign begun in the late 1970s to organize for the big majority of party members to get jobs in industry and be active members of industrial unions. Leonard's experiences were a valuable contribution in helping to build and lead party industrial fractions on both the local and national levels.

Simultaneous with the turn, the SWP also opened a leadership school where cadre were released from all other assignments so they could study the basic political works of Marx and Engels for six months, removed from the pressure of daily political responsibilities. Leonard attended the 1984 session of the

Continued on page 9

Recommended Reading

Teamster Rebellion

by Farrell Dobbs

The story of the strikes and organizing drive carried out in the 1930s by the men and women of Teamsters Local 574 in Minneapolis and what they showed about the capacities of working people. **\$19**



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by Art Preis **\$30**



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U.S. government and the assassination of Malcolm X

Below is an excerpt from The Assassination of Malcolm X, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for July. The book exposes the cover-up surrounding the murder of Malcolm X, showing how the government ignored and twisted vital evidence in order to prevent the truth from coming out at the trial of those accused of the killing. It probes once-secret FBI files that shed light on the government's hostility to Malcolm X and points toward its complicity in the crime. The piece below, written on the scene at the trial proceedings, first appeared in the Militant in February 1966. Copyright © 1976 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY HERMAN PORTER

New York, February 8—During thirteen days of testimony in the Malcolm X murder trial, nine eyewitnesses to the assassination of Malcolm X have taken the stand and been cross-examined at length. But little progress has been made toward discovering the truth about what happened on February 21, 1965, in the Audubon Ballroom where Malcolm X was shot, and the motive behind the assassination.

A complicating factor in the trial is the crucial role in the proceedings played by



Tuskeana Yearbook

Malcolm X (second from left) being interviewed by the Tuskegee University *Campus Digest* in Tuskegee, Alabama, Feb. 3, 1965. Eighteen days later he was assassinated in New York.

the police and district attorney's office. Though they are the ones who represent "the people," they can hardly be considered impartial, and some people suspect agents of the police were implicated in the murder.

The most powerful people who run this country had a motive for having Malcolm X murdered at least as strong as that of the hierarchy of the Black Muslims. And they were in a much better position to get away with it. Right-wing and racist groups had motives as well.

In the last speech he delivered, at the Audubon Ballroom on Monday, February 15, the day after his house had been bombed, Malcolm X accused Elijah Muhammad of ordering the bombing of his home, but he went on to say that a situation had been created in which *anyone* could murder him and the Black Muslims would be blamed.

Alex Haley reports in the epilogue to *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* that Malcolm told him in a phone conversation on February 20 that he was going to state he had been hasty to accuse the Black Muslims of bombing his home. "Things have happened since that are bigger than what they can do. I know what they can do. Things have gone beyond that," Haley quotes Malcolm.

More than any other individual, Malcolm X was a threat to those who wish to maintain the status quo in this country. Peter Sabbatino, one of the defense

attorneys for Talmadge Hayer, asked George Whitney, one of Malcolm's followers, during the cross-examination, whether he ever heard Malcolm say that people interested in narcotics might gun him down. "He said that people who were interested in keeping the status quo might gun him down," Whitney responded.

Malcolm X made an enormous impression in Africa during the last year of his life. Once he split from the Muslims, only eleven months before his death, the goal he set was to link the struggle of Afro-Americans to the freedom struggles of the nonwhite peoples all over the world. His immediate aim was to get the U.S. government condemned as racist in the United Nations, just as South Africa had been condemned.

He spent five of those eleven months traveling in Africa and the Middle East, meeting heads of state and high government officials and speaking before student groups. A "truth squad" from the U.S. Information Agency accompanied him wherever he went—slandering him and trying to undo what he was accomplishing. But they didn't succeed. John Lewis and Donald Harris, leaders of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, toured several African countries just after Malcolm had visited them and reported: "Malcolm's impact on Africa was just fantastic. In every country he was known and served as the main criteria for categorizing other Afro-Ameri-

cans and their political views."

Malcolm X was poisoned while he was in Cairo. His stomach was pumped very soon after he awoke one night in enormous pain. No one else who ate with him was poisoned. He mentioned the incident, during the question period at one of the public meetings of the Organization of Afro-American Unity at the Audubon Ballroom, in an off-hand way. He was probably embarrassed to speak of his own problems, especially when he was so widely accused by the press of being just a publicity hound.

Just twelve days before his assassination, Malcolm X was barred from France. He was to address a meeting of Afro-Americans and Africans in Paris and flew there, but was kept from leaving the airport and forced to fly directly back to Britain by French officials. The reason for this highly unusual act by the French government was never stated, but one rumor was that they feared they would be embarrassed by having him assassinated on French soil.

One other rumor that should be taken note of in another connection was spread among some New York policemen: that Malcolm X's group had become an organized criminal gang. I don't know who started to spread this lie or how long before the assassination it was told to police, but it certainly must have "justified" any attacks on Malcolm or his followers to those police who believed the story.

For all of these reasons, there are grounds for suspicion that some agency of the government was involved in one way or another in the assassination, and that those charged with finding the killers may indeed be covering up for them.

The police must have interviewed a great many of the estimated 400 people who were at the Audubon when Malcolm was shot. Did they select the witnesses who could be fitted into the prosecution's story? Some had seen a small part of what happened and couldn't contradict the rest of the prosecution's version. Were others subjected to pressure by the police, to learn to remember what the police wanted? Other witnesses were confused but open to suggestion by the authorities.

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Capitalism’s deepening depression

With the accelerating contraction of production and growing instability of finance capital, the world capitalist system is in the beginning stages of a depression. The devastating impact that the economic crisis is having on the vast majority of humanity will deepen, underscoring the need for the working class to get rid of this dog-eat-dog system once and for all.

As of the end of June, 16.5 percent of the U.S. workforce was jobless or underemployed—some 26 million people. Workers in other imperialist countries—such as the United Kingdom, Germany, and Japan—also face rising unemployment.

Those who have been able to keep a full-time job face fewer hours and cuts in weekly pay. In the United States the average number of hours worked in a week is now only 33. More and more workers are being forced to take unpaid time off on a regular basis.

The depression falls with even more devastating consequences on workers in semicolonial countries and on oppressed nationalities in the imperialist countries.

Under the conditions of the expanding crisis the U.S. capitalist rulers press to deepen divisions in the working class, significantly weakening affirmative action while strengthening the assault on immigrant rights.

This is only the beginning.

The only thing the employers can do to turn around

their declining rates of profit is to lower the standard of living for working people. As can be seen in the massive cuts in social spending, furloughs, and other measures in California, the capitalists try to solve their crisis on the backs of working people, drastically cutting pensions, health-care coverage, access to education, and affordable, livable housing.

The bosses and their government are waging a counterrevolutionary assault against the gains workers have won in struggle and depend on. This assault can only be answered through a revolutionary struggle for power, a proletarian revolution, to end the rule of the world’s billionaire families and reorganize society for the benefit of the vast majority.

The Socialist Workers candidates in the United States are campaigning for building a mass movement that can unify and strengthen the working class as we advance in this direction. They demand an increase in the federal minimum wage to union scale, guaranteed unemployment compensation for all workers until they find a job, and a crash public works program to put millions to work building schools, hospitals, roads, and public transportation. They call for nationalization of the land and housing stock to guarantee affordable, quality housing without fear of eviction.

The working class needs to take political power. Vote Socialist Workers!

Tom Leonard: leader of SWP

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school, setting an example for younger party members of disciplined study.

Another product of the turn was the Maritime Project, an effort to pull together the experiences of the party in the maritime industry and its relevance for socialist workers in the unions today. Leonard collaborated with other party leaders who had belonged to the maritime fraction, such as Ray Sparrow, Oscar Coover, Ed Shaw, and Catarino Garza, to put this ma-

terial together and assumed substantial responsibility for the project.

In the last years of his life he spoke across the United States and in Australia and New Zealand on lessons from the maritime fraction for workers today. He made the class battles he had been part of come alive for his audiences, not as something that happened in the past but as part of the legacy of the working class as it confronts the challenges of transforming the labor movement today.

U.S. gov’t framed up revolutionary

Continued from page 6

ance of the government of Cuba and its policies” and that Havana “would be less likely to show restraint this time around.”

Nor was the shutdown a surprise to BTTR leaders. Juan Pablo Roque, a former Cuban air force pilot who had gone to Miami in 1992 and, posing as a counter-revolutionary had entered Brothers to the Rescue to monitor its actions, returned to Cuba the day before the shutdown. Appearing on Cuban TV three days later, Roque exposed some of the group’s activities.

This included, he said, plans to introduce antipersonnel ammunition into Cuba and blow up high-tension pylons to disrupt the energy supply.

In a Feb. 27, 1996, CNN interview, Roque said he had told Basulto that Cuban authorities were expecting a provocation and were ready to shoot down intruding U.S. aircraft.

“I tried to persuade Brothers to the Rescue not to continue their flights,” he said. “But they would not listen. My opinion did not count, because they wanted martyrs to boost their anti-Castro industry.”

LETTERS

Attack on transport workers

Over a million transportation workers to date have been required to enroll in the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) program of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). This includes truck drivers and longshore, maritime, and rail workers.

To receive a TWIC card, the applicant must have a photograph and fingerprints taken and undergo a security threat assessment by the TSA. Workers with certain felony convictions cannot get a card or must wait years to obtain one. Also, applicants must sign off on a disclosure form, which states that if they are deemed a threat to national security, their employer may be notified.

Many of my coworkers view the TWIC card as just another gov-

ernment requirement that will not improve safety or security. Others see it as a means by which the government and employers could blacklist workers.

*D.C.
Houston, Texas*

Is there any difference?

As we wade deeper and deeper into the worst postwar recession, I wonder if there is any difference at all between the two main politi-

‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

The Prisoners’ Fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. To donate, send a check or money order payable to the Militant and earmarked “Prisoners’ Fund” to 306 W. 37th St., 10th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

cal parties in the USA? We need a viable socialist alternative program that will appeal to the reserve army of the unemployed.

*John King
Tampa, Florida*

Barnes on ‘meritocracy’

Thanks so much. Jack Barnes’s essay on the Obama phenomenon and the meritocracy has really helped clarify current U.S. and European political leadership.

*S.K.
Gaillard, France*

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

SWP campaign

Continued from front page

pointing to the need for the working class to take political power out of the hands of the country’s wealthy capitalist rulers.”

Pointing to rising unemployment figures, with the official nationwide rate now at 9.5 percent and actual numbers much higher, DeLuca said that unemployment insurance—for those able to get it—provides “unlivable wages for most working people.”

In response to depression conditions, “my campaign calls for guaranteed unemployment compensation at union scale for all workers until they find a job, and for a federally funded crash public works program to put millions to work at union scale to build schools, hospitals, roads, and public transportation,” she said.

The average workweek is now only 33 hours as the bosses curtail production and push speedup. “At the shop where I work, the boss said you’ll be working four days a week but you have to put out five days’ work,” said DeLuca.

She pointed to the victory won by workers at the Stella D’oro cookie factory in the Bronx. Workers there rejected steep concessions, and struck for 11 months with not one of the workers crossing the picket line. The unionists in early July won a National Labor Relations Board ruling putting them back to work with back pay. “Our campaign has given solidarity to this fight from day one,” she stated. With the company threatening to close the plant in October, the fight goes on, she added.

The spreading war in Afghanistan and Pakistan “is part of the same war Washington has been waging in Iraq,” stated Fein. “President Barack Obama is escalating what his predecessor George Bush put into motion.”

“The Socialist Workers campaign is 100 percent opposed to all U.S. wars,” Fein said. “We demand the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.”

Woman’s right to choose abortion

Fein spoke about the importance of defending a woman’s right to choose abortion, a precondition for women’s equality. In a speech at Notre Dame University in May, Obama called for finding “common ground” with antiabortion forces to reduce the number of women seeking abortions. “There is no ‘common ground,’” emphasized Fein. “For us to find ‘common ground’ is to give up a woman’s right to choose abortion.”

Rents are on the rise and so is homelessness, the socialist mayoral candidate noted. Housing should not be a commodity but a human right. The Socialist Workers campaign demands nationalization of the land and housing stock. This will halt evictions by landlords and foreclosures of farmers’ land, he said.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg is on the ballot for reelection under the Republican and Independent Party lines. He is also petitioning for a third spot for his newly created Jobs and Education Party. The mayor takes credit for an increase in reading and math scores since he took control of the school system eight years ago. The schools are not institutions of learning, however, but of social control, of instilling obedience to the bosses at one’s current or future jobs, said Fein.

“To be meaningful, education has to create the possibility for society as a whole to advance, instead of reinforcing the exploitation of the majority by the few. Until then, the only place you can find meaningful education is through political education within the workers movement,” stated Fein.

In a message to the meeting, Young Socialists leader Baumann hailed the successes of the petitioning effort. He is currently on a fact-finding visit to New Zealand and Australia to talk with workers and young people there. Learning about the struggle of working people in the Pacific will help strengthen the SWP campaign, he wrote.

The socialists’ petitions will be filed with the New York City Board of Elections on August 11, the first day that candidates can file. Over the next three-and-a-half months until the election, they will be aggressively campaigning with the working-class alternative, said Fein.